Dear Lexie,

A Midsummer Night’s Dream

This is the day I dream about all year. The longest day-summer solstice or “midsummer.” I dream about it in the middle of winter and am encouraged. On the shortest day of the year I know that my planet will continue its orbit on its tilted axis until it is most inclined toward the sun—gradually lengthening the days toward summer. In Proverbs 4:18 (WEB), King Solomon...

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Hope for Today - SIGN UP

Outreach and Evangelism

95% of Christians have never won a soul to Christ. Don’t miss out on the most exciting evangelism initiative Sligo Church has done in years, and the blessings that come with sharing your faith and hope with those around you. Introducing Hope for...

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Simply Jesus

On Following Him by Barry Casey

One of the advantages for theologians is the endless material at hand written about the Christ. But now, all these centuries later, the Jesus business is an immense industry. Learn more>>

Why I came... and why I stayed

Kathy’s Story

In July of 1976 my best friend called me unexpectedly on a Sabbath morning. Her good friend John was in town. Why not come with us to church and join us for...

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Kingdom Rock is filled with incredible Bible-Learning experiences kids see, hear, touch, and even taste. Kingdom Rock is great fun for kids.

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Spam
Not spam
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This is the day I dream about all year. The longest day- summer solstice or “midsummer.” I dream about it in the middle of winter and am encouraged. On the shortest day of the year I know that my planet will continue its orbit on its tilted axis until it is most inclined toward the sun- gradually lengthening the days toward summer.

In Proverbs 4:18 (WEB), King Solomon used the interplay between our planet and its closest star to describe the process of outreach: “The path of the righteous is like the dawning light that shines more and more until the perfect day.”

Because the term “perfect” often means “mature” in Scripture, Solomon uses it to describe high noon in all its glory! So Solomon is actually referring to the increasing amount of light we see from dawn until noon on a single day, but I still like the idea of moving toward a perfect day.

What about the other part of the equation? Our role in walking a well-lit path and leaving a path behind us that brings light to others is my favorite recurring dream for our Sligo Church family. On this midsummer day- imagine how we can accomplish that together!

We are hearing stories from more and more members about how they are getting involved in the process of increasing spiritual light in our community. Stay tuned to our website to read about Sligo’s “Hope for Today” and “Homes of Hope.”

72 years ago, this summer, Clive Staples Lewis preached a sermon in Oxford, England describing the longing of the human heart, which sometimes gets confused between heaven and earth. He said we are like children who “go on making mud pies in a slum because [we] cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased.”

This is where I bring this close to home – brace yourself! Are we, at Sligo, going to remain complacent and stuck in the mud when we could be enjoying rays of sunshine in a much more adventurous summer?

Capitalizing on this theme, look on our website to find opportunities available this summer for our involvement in Sligo ministries- like Camp Upward Bound, and Vacation Bible School. See how our youth are partnering with people who have physical disabilities. Check out how basketball becomes more than reaching up. It’s reaching out. Find out how “Sligo Underground” summer evangelism series is reaching out from the ground up. Look at Takoma Academy’s (www.ta.edu) summer enrichment program for students and young people in our neighborhood. Think about how our annual summer Homecoming can be an opportunity to reclaim members who haven’t worshiped with us for a long time.

I’m talking about us getting out of the mud. Let’s dream of a better use of our time, skills and finances. Let our children and the children of this neighborhood bask in the blessings of a more spiritual summer.

On this midsummer night- dream big! Let that dawning light shine more and more until the perfect day.

- by Pr. Debbie Eisele
Hope for Today

Looking for an easy and practical way to share faith and hope in your community? Look no further!

Sligo Seventh-day Adventist Church’s new Hope for Today outreach ministry revolves around the Homes of Hope Bible discussion groups.

The Homes of Hope initiative is a simple way of sharing the Gospel with friends and neighbors by leading a bible discussion group or offering our homes to host a Bible discussion group.

Groups meet weekly for fellowship, Bible study, prayer, and refreshments.

Will you be part of a Homes of Hope Team?

Training Info. Sign Up!
One of the advantages for professional Christians, i.e., theologians, is that there is no end to the material at hand written about the Christ. One can specialize, focus, narrow the search, just like any good scientist on the hunt or literary critic looking to tie up the loose ends. A living can be made, a career sustained, research performed and curiosity indulged. All this because—and we can be grateful for this—the subject, Jesus, is elusive in the extreme, slipping in and out of the light, always just out of reach.

By now, all these centuries later, the Jesus business is an immense industry. One can spend a lifetime inside the organizational machine, faithfully tinkering with the gears, rewriting the operating manuals, and offering tours of the plant. Rarely would the occasion arise to question the mission statement or, in the case of some variations on the theme, to ponder the profits won in the name of a first-century Jewish rabbi. There is simply too much at stake, too many events interpreted, innumerable private moments captured, diverted and sluiced through a corporate filter, too much memory and ego involved to ever hit the emergency switch and bring the whole train to a shuddering halt.

Reports of the imminent demise of religion are greatly exaggerated; those who predicted its passing so confidently back in the 60s are now rewriting their scripts to reflect the upsurge in passionate intensity. In America, every serious candidate for the presidency must pledge his or her allegiance to god and country, and find the born-again moment or a good facsimile of it, before being taken seriously for fund-raising and politicking. The fact that this was the first country to honor private belief by separating church and state provokes an equal and opposite reaction that chafes at the very freedom which guarantees its existence.

Where to begin with understanding Jesus? Who to believe? Which side to take in the wars of faith? If we are not to drown in the tide of scholarship or be sucked down in the maelstrom of fundamentalism we need to just. . . stand still and imagine. The great payoff of all the archeology, the historical and linguistic criticism of the Bible, the socio-political analysis of life as a Galilean peasant under the heel of Roman oppression is that we’ve caught clear glimpses of Jesus’ times. That is of immense value to organization and individual, scholarship and devotion, professional and pilgrim. But all that apparatus may not help to a quite simple end—imagining with the mind’s eye what Jesus must have been like from moment to moment.

Humility is needed, not ignorance. Knowledge in the service of faith, faith seeking understanding—all of that is to our advantage. And yet, for all that we know about Jesus and the Gospels I don’t think we’d feel at home in Jesus’ world. In fact, I’m not so sure we’d be at ease around Jesus. Our modern phrase, “I’m not comfortable with that,” might get us a quizzical look and a shake of the head. He did not come to make it easy on us; after all, he was an offense and a stumbling-block to almost everyone.

Garry Wills, eminent historian, classicist, and Catholic lay theologian, writes in his devotional *What Jesus Meant*, “He was a mystery in his own home. Other members of his family will be at a similar loss in coping with this disturbing person in their midst.” After all, he shocked and terrified his parents early on by slipping away from their homeward procession to argue and debate the priests in the temple. When Jesus is invoked as an example of love and obedience to parents, it’s usually meant in a restrictive and conformist sense. “But there are many indications,” notes Wills, “that Jesus was more like those restive and resisting children who have all the idealism and absolutism of youth—young people who chafe against the boundaries of the past and are panting to explore new horizons.” Such young people often stir up resentment and anger. In Jesus’ case it was extreme: his own childhood friends and neighbors tried to kill him one Sabbath after synagogue. It gives new meaning to the practice of roasting the pastor at the Sabbath potluck.

But the point here is not to do what Jesus did. He had his life and purpose; we have ours. It would be misguided and wrong, I believe, to examine his actions in order that we might reproduce them in our time and context. In many Christian bookstores you can find bracelets, T-shirts, headbands, license-plate frames, mugs, belts and rings with the acronym WWJD—What Would Jesus Do? As well-intentioned as
the sentiment might be (and I do mean sentiment) it completely misses the point. It reduces the complexity of a human life to a trite recitation of middle-class platitudes. It avoids the hard truth that there are many things that Jesus did that we wouldn’t and couldn’t do because of who he was, where he was, and the urgency of his singular mission in life.

What I am struggling to say is that the kind of radical change that Jesus called people to comes from the inside and works outward. It does not work if it’s imposed from the outside, a mere aping of the motion without the underlying emotion. Behind the emotion lies understanding and motivation, two pillars that may be grasped in a blinding flash (remember Saul’s ‘Damascus road’ experience?), but are built up over time like the growth of coral or the layers of a pearl. We want the shortcut to glory without the small gestures that come from a deepening union with Jesus.

Here is where I’ll stop because the cliches so easily come to mind. That way leads to paralysis. What is needed is the eloquence of simplicity, something truly easier said than done. As for Jesus, well, he is still there, the piece of our puzzle that never fits and in the end remakes us around his own mysterious form.

“There is much else that Jesus did. If it were all to be recorded in detail, I suppose the whole world could not hold the books that would be written.

Barry L. Casey, a long-time Sligo member and a co-leader of the Believers and Doubters Sabbath School class, teaches philosophy and communications at Stevenson University, Trinity University DC, and Washington Adventist University.

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Why I came…and why I stay

In July of 1976 my best friend called me unexpectedly on a Sabbath morning. Her good friend John was in town. Why not come with us to church and join us for lunch and the afternoon. It would be fun! So I decided to come to Sligo. It was just this once, I told myself. I mean, Seventh Day Adventist are nice people and all, but this is just a visit—not something I’d ever take seriously.

But that Sabbath Jim Londis preached. I wish that I could tell you what he preached about—I cannot. I wish that I could tell you that by the end of that summer I was baptized—I cannot. But I will tell you that by the end of the summer I was taking the bus every Saturday morning from downtown Silver Spring over to Sligo. I would sit in the balcony sometimes taking notes, hanging on to every word. A Methodist by upbringing, I knew the Bible—but now it began to have new meaning. It would be a couple of years before I would begin in a small study group—with Pastor Londis. My conversion would be slow, thoughtful and deliberate. I was baptized in 1982—and on the day he baptized me, Jim said he’d never had someone ask so many questions!

That was over thirty years ago. So much has changed in my life—as well as Sligo’s that it would be difficult to recount all of the changes. My career been very fulfilling albeit demanding! I met, fell in love with, and married Ed—who I cannot imagine life without! And I think I’ve grown spiritually —learning from those in my Sabbath school class, Believers and Doubters.

And Sligo has changed too! Several Pastors have come and gone, each leaving their own unique mark on our congregation. Our physical plant has changed from a somewhat drab auditorium into a splendid place of worship with light and color! But the ethos of Sligo remains the same. We are a congregation deeply committed to diversity—melding several different ethnic communities into a single cohesive congregation. And we are stronger than we know: we were able to pull together and pay off a hefty debt in record time! Finally, we play a unique role in both the Washington area as well as the broader Christian community as we seek to be Christ’s hands and feet in a broken world.

Why do I stay at Sligo? I could give a thousand answers! I could talk about the richness of our fellowship. I could highlight the depth of the worship experiences that we offer. But the real reason I stay at Sligo is this: this is where I am nurtured, loved, and accepted. This is where I belong!